

The Role of Economy and Agribusiness Faculty as Development and Research Center



Economy and Agribusiness

Keywords: activities, education, technology transfer, faculty, social engagement.

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Abstract

This study is based on a project realized with the public Albanian universities, Ministry of Education and Sports, and Tempus project related on activities development with triple mission of university such as technology transfer, continuing education and social engagement. This project is focused on promoting these activities with training the staff, creating regional centers and finally to create a national network to promote these activities at national level. Our focus in this study is how the Faculty of Economy to fulfill this three activities. Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness is the most important faculty of Agricultural University of Tirana. Actually it offers three cycles of studies – Bachelor, Master and Doctorate studies. It is composed by five departments and offers diplomas in: Economy and rural development policies, Applied Economics, Management in agribusiness, Finance and account, business informatics and Management in rural tourism. It is worth to mention that in the evaluation made two years ago Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness was ranked in the first place for the public Albanian universities.

1. Methodology

In the framework of the study Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness has developed a questionnaire. The questionnaire was focused on two directions: a questionnaire addressed to external actors according to study's field addressed by the faculty and another questionnaire was addressed to academic staff & students of each the faculties.

As a methodology for analyzing the questionnaire was used descriptive statistics through tables and graphs. In the questionnaire addresses to external actors, respondents were answered numerous questions which was related to the information that they had about triple feature activities offered by Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness, their opinion if the faculty should offer these activities, the types of activities that external actors would prefer, types of ways of continuing education that they would prefer, social activities for which they would have more interest, if they would be interested to get the benefits from these activities, their willingness to pay a fee to have these activities as well as their opinion if these activities will bring added value to improve their position in their work places or even in their individual formation. In total were realized 57 questionnaires.

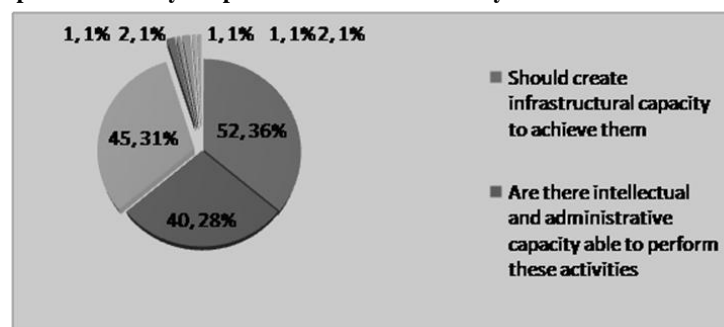
2. Results and Discussion

In the questionnaire addressed to staff & students are analyzing data relating to the questions that has to do with the view of individuals for the role of the faculty in the triple mission activities, expectations of society for these activities, the benefits that faculty and agricultural University in general can obtained from the cooperation of stakeholders of relevant fields, relations that should be established between the faculty and graduate students, society benefits from these activities as well as who should be the role of society and actors operating in the field of agriculture.

Questionnaire for staff & students

In the first question of this questionnaire respondents were asked about what they thought about the role of the faculty in the triple mission activities. An extended opinion regarding alternatives they have chosen is given in the graph below.

Graph 1. Which is your point of view for the faculty role in the three missions?

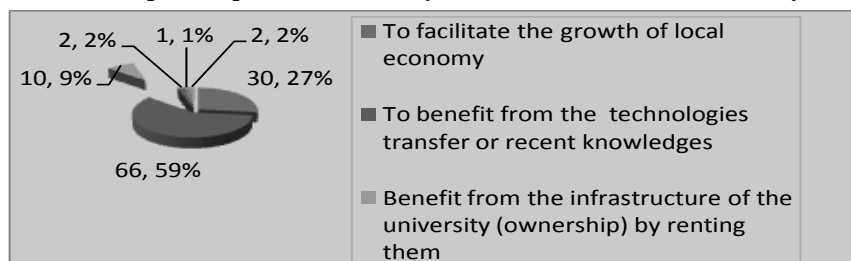


Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

Referring to the above graph it can be observed that most of the stakeholders (52.36%) have thought that the primary role of the faculty related with the triple mission activities must be the creation of infrastructural capacities to achieve them. Also they thought that faculty should pay particular attention to the financial support academic staff (45.31%) and have intellectual and administrative skills to developing these activities (40.28%). A smaller weight was occupied by other voices involved to "other" as the faculty should be part extension, should sanction with law & have the right of franchise, and should take the experience of the developed countries.

Another question that has been addressed to respondents was what they thought about the expectations of society and various actors from the faculty. Detailed information on this question is given in the following graph.

Graph 2. Expectations of society and various actors from the faculty

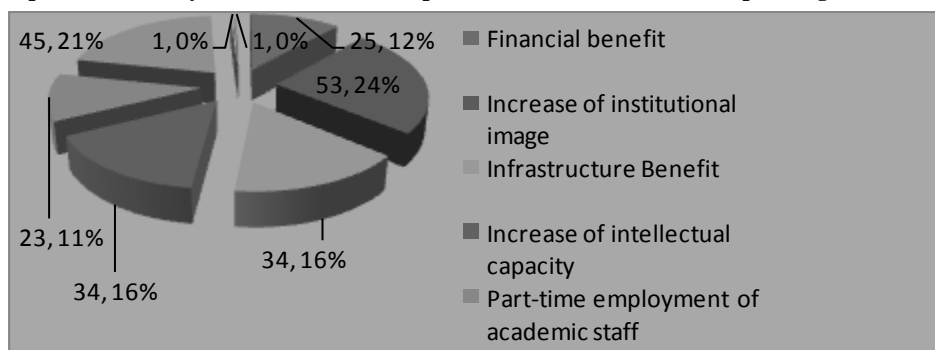


Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

As it can be seen from the graph respondents choose between alternatives how to help the increase of the local economy with 30.27%, benefiting from the transfer of the latest knowledge & technologies with 66.59%, benefiting from faculty infrastructure etc. A small part of the respondents felt skeptical about triple mission activities with expecting nothing from the faculty (2.2%), like the couple have chosen the alternative to benefit from the image growth with 2%.

The following question of for academic staff and students questionnaire has to do with the benefits that can come from collaboration with stakeholders outside the faculty. Some of these benefits could have been the financial aspect, infrastructure, to improve the image and increase intellectual capacity, student employment etc. Results of responses are summarized in the following graph.

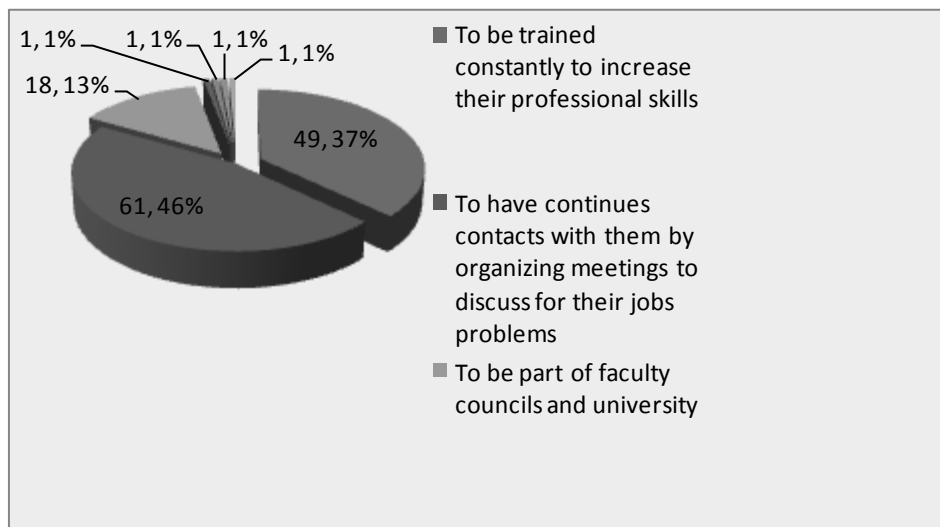
Graph 3. The faculty benefits from the cooperation with different actors operating in the faculty



Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

Between several alternatives respondents preferred institutional enhancement with 53.24%, increase intellectual capacity and benefit from infrastructure with 34.16% respectively. But a significant role has occupied the voice part time staff employment and especially the employment of students (this alternative was preferably by 25 students included in the survey). In the voice "other" the interviews have thought that other benefit opportunities will were professional practices of students and possibilities for a long-term cooperation.

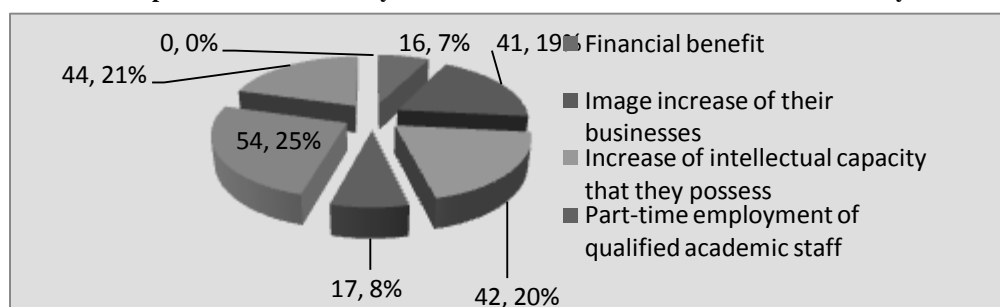
Another issue treated in the questionnaire is the relationship that should be created between the faculty and alumni. Respondents were asked if the alumni must be trained continuously to increase their intellectual abilities, should be kept continuous contacts with them by realizing meetings, be part of the Faculty Boards, etc. Results to this point are summarized in the graph below.

Graph 4. What kind of relations should be created through the faculty and alumni?

Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

Figures in the above graph shows that respondents thought that the appropriate alternative is would that of continuous contacts with graduate students to solve their problems (61.46%), and one that they be trained in continues way to enhance their professional skills (46.73%). In addition in the voice “other” are included the opportunities of alumni participation in curricula improvement, engage with science news, be invested by the state with scholarships for their qualification and recruited for employment in the faculty.

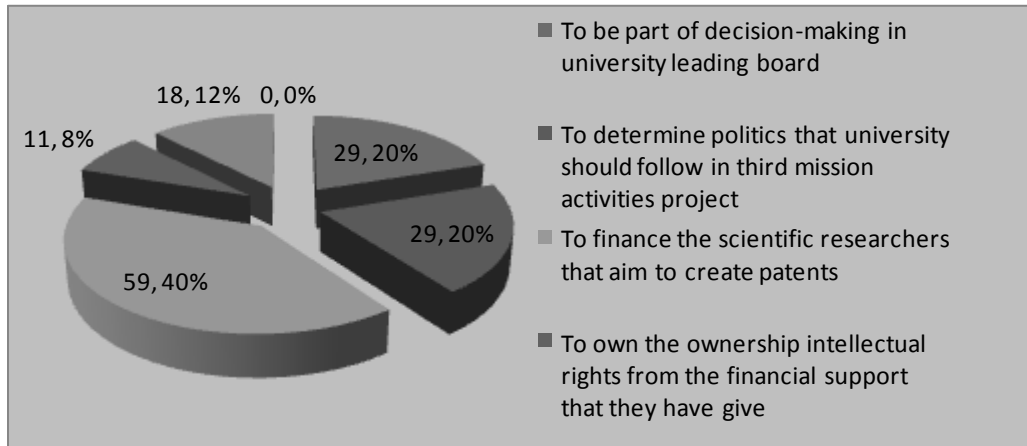
The aim of the activities with triple mission is to not only that university must benefit from external actors but the external actors have the opportunity to benefit from these activities. Considering this correlation has been paid attention to the question regarding the benefits of society and actors from this collaboration. The results are presented in the following graph.

Graph 5. Benefits of society and actors from the collaboration with the faculty

Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

Through the above graph it can be seen that the preferred alternatives are employment talented student (54.25%), the transfer of new knowledge (44.21%) and the growth of their business image.

While the last question of this questionnaire has to do with the role of society and actors operating in the field of agriculture in this collaboration with the faculty. Aggregation of relevant alternatives is reflected in the following graph.

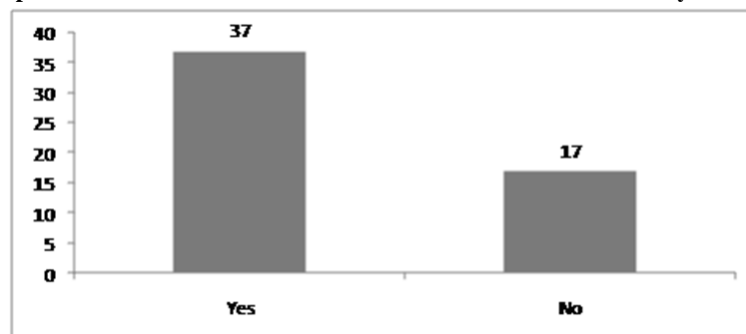
Graph 6. What kind of role should have society and actors that operate in this field inside of this cooperation

Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

One of the most preferable alternatives which are also one of problems that Albanian universities face is the funding of researchers who aim to create patents (59.40%). Also preferred were being part of the university's governing board and policy determination that university should attend in triple mission activities.

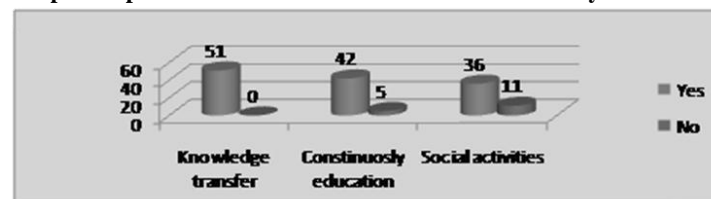
Stakeholder's questionnaire

This questionnaire was related to all stakeholders that have to do with economy and agribusiness field. In the beginning of this questionnaire interviewees were asked whether or not they had information about the triple mission activities that faculty develops. Pooled data for this question are presented in the following graph.

Graph 7. Information about other activities beside studies that faculty can offers

Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

As can be seen above the overwhelming share were informed of these activities (37 respondents), while others felt that the faculty only perform its classic function to provide knowledge through cycles of study. Taking present the activities that faculty should exercise they gave their preferences regarding knowledge transfer alternative, continuous education and social activities. Grouping of their ideas are summarized in the graph below.

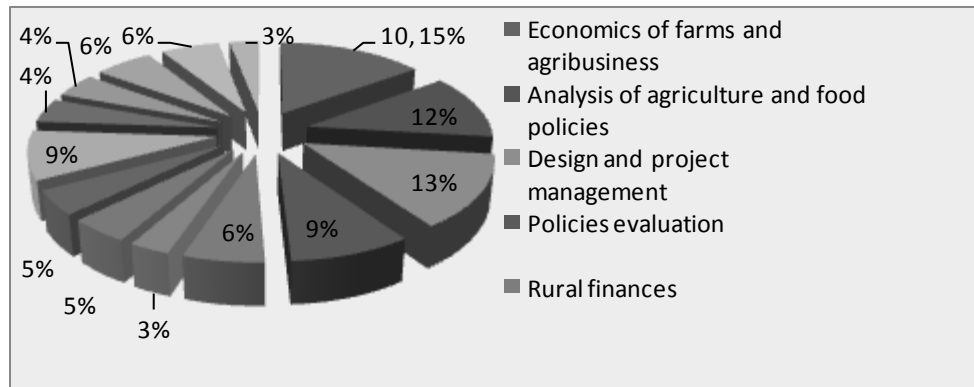
Graph 8. Opinion related with other activities that faculty should offer

Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

Generally, most of the interviewers agreed with activities that faculty offered, but also exist a small group who expressed skeptical for these activities. As a preferred activity to be provided by Faculty of economy and Agribusiness is the technologies and knowledge transfer.

Regarding the latter one of the most important questions of this questionnaire is exactly what kind of activity they are interested in the context of the technology / knowledge transfer. Their opinions to their study fields for each faculty are presented in the following graphs.

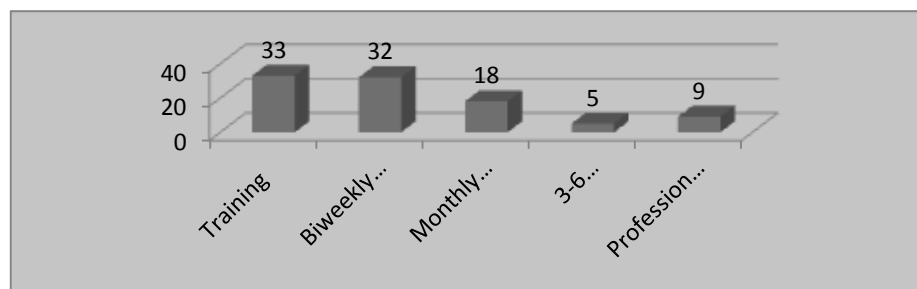
Graph 9. Activities for knowledge transfer according faculty of Economy & Agribusiness



Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

Among the favorite activities in terms of the actors who appear in areas of interest that provides the Faculty of Economics and Agribusiness were those of farm & agribusiness economics, the drafting of management project and agricultural policy analysis. Regarding the continuing education opinions of faculty are analyzed and presented in the following graph.

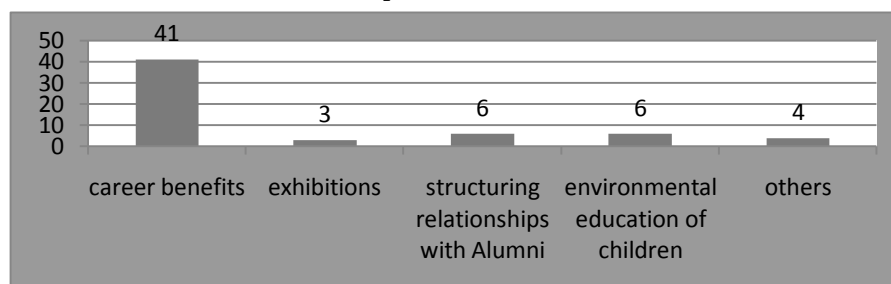
Graph 10. Activities for continuously education



Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

It is quite evident that between the most appropriate alternatives for actors interviewed most favorite ones were those offered in a short period of time mainly training and short-term courses (two weeks).

Graph 11. Social activities

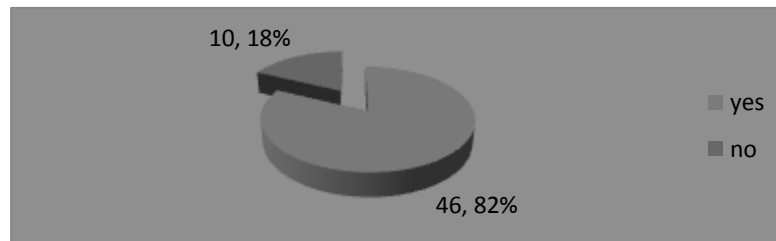


Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

The most favorite social activities were the development of the career but also a certain weight has occupied the structuring relationships with alumni.

For all additional activities offered by Agriculture University of Tirana besides the mission of study cycles stockholders were asked if they would be willing to pay a fee to obtain these activities. Their answers are reflected in the following graph

Graph 12. Training fee for offered activities



Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

At the end of this questionnaire respondents did give their opinion if the participation in these activities would affect in a better work position. Results are given in the following graph.

Graph 13. Benefits from these activities in their work position



Source: FEA (Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness), File:UM3 activities

The graph above clearly shows expectations of the respondents of the activities offered by the faculty. It is obviously that all of them agree with these extra activities. As a result of all this problems and suggestions in Agricultural University of Tirana is created an office of carrier and alumni, and specifically in Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness is created an institute that fulfill the triple role of university (technology transfer, education and social engagement).

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